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SECRET

PART

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TITLE: GENERAL Political Affairs - Multilateral

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P.L.O. - P.L.A.

Personalities and Visits

2/9

File No. E

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E	M. Montgomery	13/1						
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1081/1/67

BRITISH EMBASSY,
BAGHDAD.
10 January, 1967.

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 15
13 JAN 1967
E 2/9

Dear David

Ahmad al-Shuqairi accompanied by General Wajih al-Madani, Commander of the Palestine Liberation Army and Colonel Subhi al-Janabi, described as the P.L.A.'s Chief of Staff, graced the Army day celebrations at Baghdad on 6 January.

2. The P.L.O./P.L.A. delegation arrived from Cairo on 4 January aboard a United Arab Airlines Comet which also carried Lt. General Ali Ali Amir of the Unified Arab Command and his aides.

3. On 5 January, Shuqairi was received by the President, the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister! On the television film shown that evening many people noticed that while Naji Talib and Rajab Abdul Majid rated effusive hugs, the President only got a handshake from Shuqairi. The call on Pachachi was not televised.

4. On Army Day itself Shuqairi was placed on the President's right hand for the whole of the 2¼ hour military marchpast, to the disgust of many Iraqi nationalist officers, since he appeared by his grimaces, waves and bobs to be taking a great deal of personal credit for the Palestinian contingent on parade, and for the Iraqi tank labelled "Filastin". General Ali Ali Amir sat some way down the line on the President's left, and played a much less conspicuous part in the proceedings, in spite of the massive gold braid on his peaked hat (not worn in Iraq).

5. The next day the President gave an Iftar (breakfast) party at sundown for Shuqairi, Ali Ali Amir and their delegations. The attendance was limited to the Cabinet and senior army officers. Later the same day Shuqairi gave a press conference in the Baghdad Hotel instead of his usual harangue to students in the enormous Khuld Hall, which I suspect he was refused permission to give. I enclose translations of press accounts of some of the questions put to him and the answers he gave. Probably the most disingenuous remark of the evening was Shuqairi's claim that his dispute with King Hussein was not a personal one. He avoided questions on details of the P.L.O.'s alleged underground organisation in Jordan.

D. Montgomery, Esq.,
Eastern Department,
Foreign Office, S.W.1.

/5.

CONFIDENTIAL

5. The whole visit was presented as an important nationalist occasion by the Naji Talib/Rajab Abdul Majid/Duraid al-Damaluji faction in the cabinet, with Shakir Mahmud Shukri (Defence) tagging along and hoping that his own glory would not suffer too much at the expense of the visitors. But by 8 January, when Shuqairi and Ali Ali Amir left, Naji and Rajab had obviously had enough of their importunate and self-important guests. Only the Acting Chief of Staff, Major General Hammudi Mahdi, is reported to have seen them off at the airport.

6. It seems unlikely that Shuqairi succeeded in touching the Iraqis for a supplementary grant towards his own, or the P.L.A.'s expenses. The annual compulsory levy of 3% on the basic salaries of Palestinians in official and semi-official Iraqi departments and in large business or industrial concerns, which is scrupulously deducted at source, must be already bringing him in a tidy sum. The press states that during his visit Shuqairi asked the government officially to amend the relevant law to make the levy compulsory on all Palestinians working here; and that the government are inclined to accept his proposal, since of course it costs them nothing.

7. I am sending copies of this letter with enclosures to Amman and Cairo; and without enclosures to Chanceries at Peking, Saigon, Damascus, Jedda and Washington and to the Consulate General, Basra.

Yours ever,

Stephen.

(S. L. Egerton)

Baghdad News - 8 January, 1967

Sayid Ahmed Al-Shuqairi, President of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, at a press conference held last night, thanked the Government, the people, the army and President of Iraq for helping the organisation and giving it full freedom to carry out its nationalist duties.

Sayid Shuqairi said that the Palestine Army in Iraq has so much freedom that it considers itself on Palestine soil - it possesses complete freedom in all its duties. The Organisation gets full support from all Government officials as well, Sayid Shuqairi added.

Speaking of his visit to Iraq, Sayid Shuqairi said: "I am pleased to be here during these immortal days of Army Day celebrations - the celebrations of the 46th anniversary of the birth of the Iraqi Army. This is a happy occasion not for Iraq only but for all the Arabs - and for Palestine in particular - since the growth of the Iraqi Army strengthens our hopes for the liberation of the usurped homeland. I was moved when I saw the Iraqi and Palestinian units passing in front of me during the Army Day celebrations on Friday".

Touching on the dispute between King Hussein of Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Sayid Shuqairi said: "Our dispute with King Kussein is not a personal one but it is a dispute for the sake of liberation of Palestine. Jordan is our country and our people live in its two parts (East and West banks of the Jordan River) and its border must be left open for all the Arab forces".

Sayid Shuqairi said that the Palestine Liberation Organisation will continue its struggle in spite of plots and schemings against it.

The PLO President thanked "all liberated peoples which support the Palestine cause."

Al-Manar - 9 January, 1967

This paper publishes certain statements made by Sayid Ahmad al-Shuqairi at his press conference held at Baghdad Hotel the day before yesterday, in reply to the questions by this newspaper which were not published in the context of the statements in question.

Question: What is your opinion about the announcement made a few days ago that the Palestine Liberation Organisation has decided to "assassinate" King Hussein and Wasfi al-Tell?

Al-Shuqairi: replied: "The PLO does not believe in political assassination but believes in the people's struggle."

In talking about the roots and extent of his difference with King Hussein, Sayyid al-Shuqairi said: "Our difference with him is not over the system of Government being a monarchy or republican, capitalist or socialist, and not even over unity, but is over the question of liberation". We want him to give a chance to the people of Palestine to work on the land of Palestine".

Speaking about aid, particularly arms, from the socialist countries, foremost being communist China, for the PLO, he said: "These arms not only have been received but have been used and are still being used."

About his announcement that he will send Palestinian volunteers to Viet-Nam, he said: "We have approached the Vietnamese Ambassador in Cairo and he has promised to study the request.

Reference

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES 13 JAN 1967

E2/9

(2)

SECRET

Mr. Moberly
Mr. Marnham

IRAQI INTEREST IN JORDAN

On 17 January I asked the Jordanian Chief of Staff, General Khammash, what impression he had of the attitude of the Iraqis towards the stationing of Iraqi troops in Jordan as gleaned from his discussions in Cairo.

2. General Khammash said that this was a question that King Hussein and the Prime Minister had been very anxious to have answered when he returned to Amman.

3. His impression was that they were not at all interested, though they hoped that their faces would be saved by the collapse of the proposal for reasons other than their own unpreparedness. He thought that for practical reasons they would find it very difficult to put the proposed ground forces in Jordan, and that they had security worries, especially about the Air Force getting so close to Israel - he quoted some story about one of their better MIG pilots having been declared insecure because he had an English wife.

4. In his usual modest way Khammash claimed all the credit for having, at the U.A.C. meeting, got Jordan out of the corner in which she had been placed by her acceptance of the decision that other Arab troops should be stationed in Jordan (he also, in a kindly way, blamed Wasfi Tel for having got Jordan into the corner by complaining about the absence of Egyptian help on 13 November). By getting it accepted in the U.A.C. meeting that the question raised political issues which could only be settled at an Arab Summit, he had avoided Jordan being ~~exploited~~ politically by going back on the agreement, whilst to all intents and purposes postponing the implementation of the agreement indefinitely.

exposed

5. This is not out of line with the impressions in Mr. Egerton's letter 1081/1/67 of 10 January about the attitude of the Iraqis to the visit of Shukairi.

(W. Morris)
18 January, 1967.

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(1074/4/67)

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3

BRITISH EMBASSY,

BEIRUT

20 February, 1967

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVE 24 FEB 1967

Dear Beirut E2/9

Further signs of trouble in the Palestine Liberation Organisation emerged here on 15 February when Shafiq al-Hout, the Head of the local PLO office, issued a press statement attacking Shuqairi. I enclose a copy of a cutting from L'Orient.

2. Al-Hout was unusually vague about the exact nature of his charges against Shuqairi but it appears that they are largely based on amour propre and relate to the omission of his name from the list of the members of the newly reorganised leadership.

3. The consequences for al-Hout have been swift and sore. Late at night on 17 February he was shot as he was returning to his house and slightly wounded. He is now in hospital.

4. I am sending copies of this letter and of the enclosure to the Chanceries at Damascus, Amman, Baghdad, Jedda, Cairo, Washington and Tel Aviv and to the Consulate General at Jerusalem.

Yours ever

James Craig

(A.J.M. Craig)

A. E. Saunders, Esq.,
Eastern Department,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.

I. R. D 3/3

J. R 9/3

1/3

L'Orient - 16 February

Minutes

Le directeur de l'O.L.P. à Beyrouth accuse :

Choukeyri a changé d'avis au sujet du « conseil de la révolution » palestinienne

Dans une déclaration faite à la presse, M. Chafik Hout directeur du Bureau de l'Organisation de libération de la Palestine à Beyrouth, s'est attaqué à M. Ahmed Choukeyri, président de l'Organisation, pour avoir pris tout seul l'initiative d'annoncer les candidatures à des postes élevés dans un commandement réorganisé de l'OLP. M. Hout n'avait pas été mentionné.

Cette initiative de la part de M. Choukeyri est considérée par M. Hout comme une violation de la constitution de l'Organisation qui stipule que ces candidatures doivent avoir l'approbation du comité exécutif.

Des informations en provenance du Caire avaient donné les noms des candidats aux postes de commandement dans l'Organisation, sans mentionner celui de M. Hout.

Divergences sur les méthodes

Dans sa déclaration, M. Hout a affirmé qu'il n'y avait pas de divergences entre lui et M. Choukeyri au sujet du but à atteindre, mais plutôt au sujet des méthodes à appliquer dans l'organisation de l'OLP.

« M. Choukeyri a annoncé personnellement les nouvelles nominations dans l'Organisation sans l'approbation du comité exécutif, comité qu'il a aboli le 31 décembre dernier et remplacé par ce qu'il appelle le « conseil de la révolution », a déclaré M. Hout.

« Mais il semble maintenant que M. Choukeyri ait commencé la série de ses contacts avec des groupements palestiniens en vue se former de ce qu'il appelle le commandement de l'Organisation », ce qui signifie, a ajouté M. Hout, que M. Choukeyri a peut-être changé d'avis en ce qui concerne le « conseil de la révolution ».

Des informations en provenance du Caire ont donné hier les noms de plusieurs Palestiniens pour le nouveau commandement. M. Hout avait été nommé dans le conseil de la révolution qui avait remplacé le comité exécutif.

Quant à M. Choukeyri lui-même, il avait été nommé président de l'Organisation de libération de la Palestine par une résolution prise par la première conférence arabe au sommet en janvier 1964.

A la suite de l'attaque israélienne contre le village de Samouh, l'année dernière, l'OLP a été interdite en Jordanie, sous l'inculpation de vouloir semer la discorde et la subversion.

Les conférences arabes au sommet ont été boycottées l'année dernière par la République Arabe Unie, et comme résultat, l'Arabie Séoudite a gelé toutes ses contributions aux organismes issus de ces conférences, qui sont l'OLP, le commandement arabe unifié et l'Organisation pour l'exploitation des eaux du Jourdain et de ses affluents.

RESTRICTED

(10717/67)

British Embassy,
AMMAN.

8 August, 1967.

Dear Willie.

Ahmad Shugairy

While I was waiting to see King Hussein yesterday I had a talk in Zeid Rifa'i's room with Ahmed Touqan, who had just returned from Khartoum, and others about the Arab Foreign Ministers' Conference.

2. I asked what role, if any, Shuqairy had played. Touqan said that he had been an embarrassment to all the delegates. He had made only two or three minor interventions in their discussions but had been an infernal nuisance in getting himself invited to the parties and other fringe benefits surrounding the meeting.

3. Zeid Rifa'i then told us that when he had arrived with King Hussein in Cairo for his last meeting with President Nasser Shuqairy had been at the Airport and had greeted the King with the Vice Presidents of the U.A.R. Nasser had asked him pointedly how he had happened to know that King Hussein was arriving at that time. Shuqairy answered that he had heard it announced on the radio and considered it his duty to be present at the Airport. After a pause Nasser had said to Shuqairy that it had been a very long time since they had last met. Shuqairy said it had indeed been about a couple of months. Zeid commented that Nasser was clearly trying to demonstrate to King Hussein that he was no longer sponsoring Shuqairy and added that there was no room for Shuqairy in the Arab world at this time. Touqan heartily agreed.

Yours ever.

(P.G.D. Adams)

W. Morris Esq., C.M.G.,
Eastern Department,
Foreign Office.

Copied to:
A.B. Urwick Esq., Washington.

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(5)

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E2/9

QB15 REGROUPING FORCES FOR UNIFIED STRUGGLE: NEW PLO CHIEF

(FOR INFORMATION ONLY: NOT TO BE ATTRIBUTED TO MENA)

(MIDDLE EAST NEWS AGENCY) CAIRO: ACTING PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION (PLO) CHAIRMAN YAHYA HAMMUDAH SAYS IN 'AL-AHRAM' TODAY THAT THE PLO WILL REMAIN A NATIONAL INSTRUMENT NOT DOMINATED BY ANY ONE GROUP. INACTION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM FACING IT. WE DO NOT HOLD AL-SHUQAYRI ALONE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH INACTION AND OTHER PROBLEMS. THERE WERE OTHER FACTORS I CANNOT DISCUSS NOW. THE PLO'S PRIMARY AIM IS TO REGROUP ALL PALESTINE FORCES FOR A UNIFIED ARMED STRUGGLE.

ASKED ABOUT SENDING AN EIGHT-MAN DELEGATION TO THE ARAB DIKIT AT A TIME WHEN THE PLO IS CUTTING EXPENDITURE, HAMMUDAH SAID A STRONG DELEGATION, INCLUDING SEVERAL PALESTINE MILITARY MEN, IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF THE PROPOSAL TO REVIVE THE UNIFIED ARAB COMMAND.

MF BBC MON 26/12 EM 1316

B15 REGROUPING 2 VOLUNTEERS FROM ARAB WORLD WELCOME

HAMMUDAH LIVED IN EAST GERMANY FOR TWO YEARS AFTER BEING A REFUGEE IN SYRIA IN 1957. HE HAS VISITED THE SOVIET UNION AND YUGOSLAVIA. HE HAS TAKEN PART IN MANY INTERNATIONL CONFERENCES AND VISITED MANY COUNTRIES AS A MEMBER OF POPULAR AND OFFICIAL PALESTINIAN AND JORGANIAN DELEGATIONS.

'AL-JUMHURIYAH' CARRIES A STATEMENT BY HAMMUDAH WHO SAID THAT THE PLO WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS FROM ALL ARAB COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY SINCE ISRAEL CONTINUES TO RELY ON VOLUNTEERS AND MERCENARIES OF ALL RACES.

MF BBC MON 26/12 EM 1319

B155 43@49708,@ 3

THERE IS NO LONGER ANY DISPUTE OR OPPOSITION AFTER AL-SHUQAYRI'S RESIGNATION. ALL FACTIONS , WHICH REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH THE FORMER CHAIRMAN, ARE NOW WITHIN THE PLO FRAMEWORK. THE FATAH AND AL-ASIFAH ORGANISATIONS AND THE PEOPLES FRONT (AL-JABHAH AL-SHABIYAH) SUPPORT US, HAMMUDAH SAID. THE PLO WILL CARRY OUT RADICAL ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES TO CREATE A COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP. STEP UP THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND UNIFY ALL STRUGGLING PALESTINE FORCES UNDER A SINGLE FLAG. THE FEDAYEEN NOW OPERATING WITHIN OCCUPIED TERRITORY ARE TO BE CALLED STRUGGLERS IN FUTURE BECAUSE ALL PEOPLE WILL TAKE PART IN THE LIBERATION BATTLE.

HAMMUDAH SAID THE HOPES OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OF THE ENTIRE ARAB NATION REST WITH THE MU.A.R.

END BBC MON (KY) 26/12 EM 1322

EASTERN

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K.C S

(E2/9)

COPY

entered on E2/5 [illegible] [P.L.O.]

B42 P.L.O. LEADERS CALL ON SHUQAYRI TO RESIGN

(BEIRUT RADIO) SIX MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANISATION (P.L.O.), INCLUDING THE COMMANDER OF THE LIBERATION ARMY, HAVE ASKED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE P.L.O., AHMAD AL-SHUQAYRI, TO RELINQUISH HIS POST IMMEDIATELY +IF HE WISHES THE ORGANISATION TO REMAIN IN EXISTENCE+.

IN A STATEMENT CIRCULATED BY POST, THE SIX SAID THEY WILL HOLD AL -SHUQAYRI RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF REFUSING TO RELINQUISH HIS POST.

THE STATEMENT, DATED 14TH DECEMBER, DOES NOT MENTION WHERE IT WAS ISSUED. THE SIX MEMBERS - ABD AL-KHALIQ YAGHNUR, [illegible]D IN BAHJAT ABU GHARBIYAH, USAMAH AL-NAQIB, YAHYA HAMMUDAH, [illegible] No.15 NIMR AL-MASIR, AND WAJIH MADANI -, LIVE IN DIFFERENT ARAB COUNTRIES.

MF BBC MON 18/12 EM 1602

E2/5

B42 SHUQAYRI (2) +NON-EXISTENT+ REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL

IN THEIR MESSAGE THE MEMBERS SAID: +THE PALESTINE ARABS. . . ARE NO LONGER SATISFIED WITH THE WAY YOU MANAGE ITS AFFAIRS AND DEAL WITH THE HOLY CAUSE OF PALESTINE. . . +

+YOU INSIST ON FOLLOWING METHODS WHICH HAVE BEEN PROVED BANKRUPT: THE PEOPLE HAD HARDLY FORGOTTEN YOUR ANNOUNCEMENT OF A YEAR AGO ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NON-EXISTENT REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AND A LIBERATION COUNCIL, WHEN YOU PROCLAIMED ANOTHER NON-EXISTENT REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IN THE OCCUPIED HOMELAND. . . . HENCE YOU MUST RELINQUISH THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE P.L.O. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, IF THE ORGANISATION IS TO CONTINUE TO EXIST AND WORK FOR THE AIM FOR WHICH IT WAS ESTABLISHED. . . .+

MF BBC MON 18/12 EM 1833

B42 SHUQAYRI (3): NEED FOR ENLIGHTENED COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

THE MEMBERS INSIST THAT AL-SHUQAYRI RELINQUISH THE P.L.O. CHAIRMANSHIP IMMEDIATELY, SO THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, IN COOPERATION WITH ACTIVE PALESTINIAN ORGANISATIONS, +CAN BRING ABOUT ENLIGHTENED COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE ORGANISATION,. . . REPRESENTING THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE+.

TWO PALESTINE FEDAYEEN ORGANISATIONS, FATAH AND THE POPULAR FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE (AJ-JABHAH AL-SHABIYAH LI TAHRIR FALASTIN), HAVE CRITICISED AL-SHUQAYRI, PARTICULARLY AFTER THE P.L.O.'S ANNOUNCEMENT EARLY THIS MONTH OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A +REVOLUTION COMMAND COUNCIL FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE+.

END BBC MON (KY) 18/12 EM 1836

CONFIDENTIAL

(10715/67)

BRITISH EMBASSY,
CAIRO.

28 December 1967.

Dear Hookey.

The P.L.O.

Shukeiry resigned on 24 December as Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the representative of Palestine on the Arab League Council. The Executive Committee nominated Yehia Hammouda as his successor ad interim in the first post, and the Arab League is to meet after Ramadan Bairam to consider a successor to the second, who is normally elected by the League Council. The Committee has appointed a provisional Executive Sub-Committee of four members; and has issued a statement pledging itself to work for the goals of the establishment of a responsible collective leadership representing the will of the people, unification and stepping-up of the armed struggle, the achievement of national unity, mobilisation of the national effort, revolutionising of the P.L.O. agencies.

2. Hammouda is described in the press as having sought refuge in Syria in 1957, spent two years in East Germany, and visited the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The next most prominent of the new leadership appears to be Nimr El Masri. Other members are Dr. Oussama El Nakib, Namr el Eschry, Waguih el Medani, Bahgat Abu Gnariba, Yusser Abdel Rehim, Gamal El Sourany and Magdi Abu Ramadan.

3. This morning I called on the Counsellor at the Jordanian Embassy, who is himself a Palestinian, to seek enlightenment. He told me that Shukeiry had become unacceptable because of his past attacks on King Hussein, his hostility to the Jordanian Government (with whom the West Bankers had to live), and the non-representation of the West Bankers in the Organisation (these seem to be purely West Bank reasons). Since Hammouda and his associates had been to Amman just before the recent crisis in the Organisation's affairs, and judging by the tone of comment in Jordan, the Counsellor thought that they had at any rate unofficial approval of the Jordan Government. He had also noted that they had the support of the Executive Committee of the Fund for Palestine Refugees. The split was not however,

/as he

H. B. Walker, Esq.,
N.E.A.D.

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as he saw it, a split between the West Bank and Gaza, or non-Jordanian, Palestinians - two of the Gaza members were still in the Committee - but rather a matter of personalities. As for the Egyptian Government, he did not see it quite as washing its hands of the affair (Cp. paragraph 7 of our despatch No.9 quoting President Nasser). The Egyptians themselves had found Shukeiry an embarrassment, notably in Arab Summit meetings, and wanted in any case to keep the Palestinians occupied and therefore quiet. He did not think it was their policy to encourage terrorism and sabotage at this moment, though they would have in mind that a unified organisation might be useful later on.

4. I took the opportunity to ask him what he thought about the press discussion on the Palestine problem started by Ahmed Bahaeddin which I reported rather scrappily in November (my letter 1084/67 of 20 November). He said the Palestinians had been puzzled by this, particularly as Bahaeddin had tried it out much earlier, in June. They were suspicious of the origins of the idea, the more so because it ran parallel to Israel ideas of an autonomous Palestine state; it smacked too much of the beginnings of a sell-out. The Egyptian Government's spokesman had a short time ago answered a question on this in terms which suggested that it had dropped the idea, whether or not it had originated it.

I am copying this letter to Chanceries at Amman, Beirut and Tel Aviv.

Yours ever,

R.M.T.

(R. M. Tesh)

ARAB WORLD

SHUKEIRY GETS THE SACK

HUSSEIN HAS HEART-ATTACK

Almost four years after founding the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Ahmed Shukeiry has been sacked as its president. His removal came after a six-week struggle for the leadership of the Palestine movement. He was finally pushed out by his closest supporters after it became clear that his leadership was incompatible with the unity of the various terrorist groups operating against Israel.

Before the June war, Shukeiry's claim to leadership had been based on his prestige within Arab League circles and the support which he received from President Nasser. But since the war, not only has Nasser's own prestige dwindled but the initiative has been taken by the al-Fatah terrorist groups operating from Jordan and Syria. The al-Fatah have long taunted the PLO as being only a paper movement and its leader as being an empty demagogue.

Various Egyptian circles are trying to persuade Western Governments that the sacking of Shukeiry is proof of Egyptian moderation. In fact, it is a surrender to even more dangerous elements.

Last ditch appeal: The final onslaught on Shukeiry began at the weekend when seven members of his Executive committee demanded his resignation for failure to unite the various Palestinian groups. His supporters made a last-ditch appeal to Arab League Secretary Hassouna. They claimed that the anti-Shukeiry elements had fallen into the net of the CIA. But the opposition was strongly supported by the Palestine Students' Union, the Federation of Palestine Students in Iraq and the Iraqi Federation of Palestinian Workers.

The new acting PLO President is 55 year-old lawyer Yehia Hammouda, who fled from Ramallah shortly after the Israeli occupation in June. Hammouda has spent two years in East Germany and visited the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia after seeking refuge in Syria in 1957. His appointment is believed to have been "cleared" with the Soviet Union, which had recently expressed dissatisfaction with Shukeiry's hot-headed behaviour and with his frequent attempts to flirt with Communist China.

Old tale spinner: Shukeiry emerged as President of the PLO in the first Arab summit in Cairo early in 1964. President Nasser, who had become his principal backer, used him as an instrument for subversion inside Jordan and as a counter blast to the extremist Syrian challenge.

SHUKEIRY
Farewell or au revoir ?

His fascination to many Palestinian Arabs was his great flow of language and his ability to quote chapter and verse on the history of the Arab nationalist movement in Palestine. A one-time employee of a Jewish estate agent in Acre, he personified the bitterness of the Arab middle classes in Mandatory Palestine.

But despite many attempts at reconciliation by Jordan, he continued to be a distrusted and controversial figure. The Jordanians used to ridicule him as "an old tale spinner from Acre" and in 1960 a Jordanian newspaper reminded him that "he is the son of a negro mother and should return to the negro female slaves of Saudi Arabia."

Scapegoat: But the real grievance against him was that he was a personal coward who incited the common people to take the risks against Israel. His disappearance at the time of the June war did nothing to enhance his reputation.

For this reason his sacking has a wider significance — because the other Arab leaders behaved in the same way . . .

Meanwhile, the extreme anti-Israel role has now passed into the hands of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. These two countries, have donated vast amounts of money to Egypt and there is no prospect of it earning them any political dividends. King Feisal in particular is therefore seizing the opportunity to denounce any sign of weakness on the part of President Nasser. He hopes it will hasten the fall of his arch-enemy. This is being coupled with a new propaganda assault on the growing influence of the Soviet Union.

For Saudi Arabia, this is seen as a direct threat to King Feisal's traditional regime. The Saudis are particularly alarmed at the Russians' direct role in the Yemeni civil war and the quiet way in which they are emerging as the protector of the nationalist regime in Aden.

The attitude of Jordan is more problematic. According to Arab sources in London, King Hussein recently had a slight heart attack, probably due to the strain of his world-wide diplomatic tour. He was attended to by a British specialist, secured by the Jordanian embassy on the personal instructions of Princess Muna.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, 30 December, 1967

THE SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF THE ZIONIST FEDERATION, COMMERCIAL ROAD GREAT SYNAGOGUE AND EAST LONDON BETH ZION. M'Laveh Malka at 7.30 p.m. at the Synagogue, 262 Commercial Road, London, E.1. Speaker : The Rav Rashi, Rabbi Dr. E. W. Kirzner, Ph.D., M.A., M.Sc. Chazan : Rev. Reuben Turner. At the Piano : H. Lipshi Esq., In the Chair : M. Lederman, Es.. Golden Certificates will be presented to : Mrs. Rabinowitz and Mrs. Kurshner. Refreshments. All welcome. Admission Free.

Tuesday, January 2, 1968

EAST LONDON "ZION ASSOCIATION" AND FIELDGATE STREET GT. SYNAGOGUE. "Warsaw & Vilna" lecture by Dr. H. Rabinowicz. 41 Fieldgate Street, E.1. 8.30 p.m.

WEST LONDON ZIONIST SOCIETY. Latest films of Israel. 71 Brook Green, Hammersmith, W.6. 8.30 p.m.

THEODOR HERZL SOCIETY. Chanukah Celebration. Speaker : Mr. Janus Cohen. Musical programme by Johanna Metzger Lichtenstern and Sidney Faber. 57 Eton Avenue, N.W.3. 8.15 p.m.

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Either Mr McKay or Mr Saunders 27/2

Reply on EJ1/17

(2/11)

BRITISH EMBASSY,
AMMAN.

22 January 1968

RECEIVED IN ARCHIVES No. 15
9 FEB 1968
E2/9.

Dear Daly,

The P.L.O.

Please refer to Tesh's letter 10715/67 of 28 December to Hooky Walker (not to all).

2. A Palestinian friend of mine, who is generally well informed on Palestinian affairs, has known Yahya Hammudeh for years, is related to him by marriage and has had a chance to speak to him at length since his appointment as Chairman of the P.L.O., gave me the following description of the man:

Born Lifta (near Jerusalem), aged about 58-60, educated Rashidia Secondary School in Jerusalem where he subsequently qualified as a lawyer; worked with mandatory authorities in Jerusalem; in 1948 he moved to Ramallah and was legal adviser to the Arab Bank; was not really involved in politics until the troubles at the time of the Baghdad Pact, during which he joined Nabulsi's National Socialist party and became actively anti-Hashemite; at this time he also showed Ba'thist sympathies; he was interned for some time as a result but was released and fled to Syria; there he met the ex-communist Issam Hammad and others and toured the Soviet Union and some Eastern European countries; he returned to his practice in Ramallah three years later; during the 1963 troubles he played only a small part and paid little more than lip service to the anti-régime elements.

On the formation of the P.L.O. he was a not very active member of the National Council; in 1966 he was appointed to the Executive Committee, on which he remained until the P.L.O. was banned in Jordan at the beginning of 1967; he decided to remain in Jordan and moved to Amman.

He is a close friend of Abdul Majid Shuman, the P.L.O. Treasurer who became increasingly disenchanted with Shuqairi's unauthorised use of P.L.O. funds and was one of the leading P.L.O. figures whose complaints against Shuqairi led to his resignation.

Hammudeh is personally unassuming and approachable; he readily agreed to receive Mrs. Margaret McKay, M.P. on her last visit to Jordan (the meeting in fact never took place, but for purely practical reasons). He is married and has twin children.

3. To the reasons listed in paragraph 3 of Tesh's letter for the removal of Shuqairi (his attacks on King Hussein, his hostility to the Jordan Government, the non-representation of the West Bankers in the P.L.O.), my informant added others, the most significant of which /seemed

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Eastern Department.

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seemed to be the withdrawal of Egyptian support. In the days of Jordan-U.A.R. raprochement, the U.A.R. had no further use for a man whom they had previously used as a mouthpiece for attacks on Jordan.

4. Speaking of his own plans for the P.L.O. Hammudeh listed four important changes in policy from that pursued by Shuqairi:

(a) the P.L.O. would keep out of inter-Arab conflicts;

(b) the P.L.O. would keep out of international conflicts. Despite his previous association with communists, Hammudeh stated that his attitude to the Soviet Union would be pragmatic and not ideological; anything he said in praise of the Soviet Union would, as in the past, be dependent on her attitude to the Arab cause;

(c) the P.L.O. will co-operate with all Palestinian groups;

(d) the P.L.O. leadership would be collective and all decisions would be referred to the Executive Committee.

5. The Jordan Government's attitude to the P.L.O. is not yet clear. The Organisation is still officially banned in theory despite Shuqairi's brief return to Jordan immediately before the war. But much of the Jordanian quarrel with the P.L.O. was ostensibly attributable to Shuqairi himself and at a time like this it will be difficult for the Jordanians to be publicly unsympathetic towards the Palestinians. The future status of the P.L.O. in Jordan was one of the things which King Hussein told Peter Tripp he wanted to discuss at the next Arab Summit (since postponed indefinitely, it seems). But these remain the constant stumbling blocks of the Palestinian Entity and the Palestinian right to self determination (in both of which, for all his preferability to Shuqairi, Hammudeh firmly believes) which, at a time when the danger of Palestinian separatism is anyway greater, pose as serious an obstacle as ever. It is already rumoured (though denied by government sources) that the Jordanians have objected to the appointment of Hammudeh as representative of the Palestinian people at the Arab League. True or not, there is no doubt that the rehabilitation of the P.L.O. will present its familiar crop of thorny problems for the Hashemite régime even without Shuqairi at its head.

Yours Ever,

Adrian Fortescue

(J. A. Fortescue)

Copied to Chanceries at: Beirut, Cairo, Jedda, Tel Aviv, Washington and H.M. Consulate-General, Jerusalem.

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(1072/68)

(9)

E2/9.

With the compliments of

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S
CONSULATE GENERAL

Eastern Department,
Foreign Office,
LONDON, S.W.1.

JERUSALEM

7 February, 1968.

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(1/15)

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Eastern Department

E2/9

With the compliments of

HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S
EMBASSY

CAIRO

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BRITISH EMBASSY,

CAIRO.

20 February 1968.

(1/15)

Dear Consulate-General,

P.L.O.

We are sending you, as requested in your letter 1072/68 of 7 February, a copy of Tesh's letter 10715/67 of 28 December, and will bear in mind your interest in this subject in future.

2. We are also copying this letter, with enclosure, to Jedda and Washington, and without enclosure to Eastern Department.

Yours ever,

CHANCERY.

Consulate-General,
JERUSALEM.

LAST PAPER

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BRITISH CONSULATE-GENERAL,
JERUSALEM.

(10[illegible]/68) 7 February, 1968.

Dear Chancery,

P.L.O.

Could you send us a copy of Tesh's letter 10715/67 of 28 December referred to in Fortescue's letter to Daly (2/11) of 22 January?

2. The P.L.O. is of direct interest to us, although since it has operated mainly outside Palestine since it was banned by the Jordanian Government we have nothing at present to contribute on the subject.

3. We are sending copies of this letter to Eastern Department and to Beirut, Jedda, Tel Aviv, Amman and Washington.

Yours ever,

Consulate-General.

The Chancery,
British Embassy,
CAIRO.

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